

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MA, FR, US
SUBJ: FRENCH IN MALAGASY FONMIN'S TRIP TO U. S. AND FUTURE
OF NASA STATION

1. FRENCH EMBOFF GERARD DUMONT CALLED ON DCM 02 JUL ON INSTRUCTIONS HIS AMB TO REQUEST INFO ON MALAGASY FOREIGN MINISTER RATSIKAKA'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO U. S. AMB MENDENHALL HAD ALREADY SPOKEN BRIEFLY TO FRENCH AMB ABOUT VISIT, BUT DUMONT EXPLAINED THAT HIS EMBASSY WISHES SEND MESSAGE TO QUAI AND AMB WANTED TO BE ABSOLUTELY SURE OF FACTS.

2. DCM REITERATED (AS FRENCH EMBASSY INFORMED SEVERAL MONTHS AGO) THAT VISIT WAS WITHIN FRAMEWORK CU IV GRANTS AND TECHNICALLY WAS NOT AN OFFICIAL VISIT SINCE LATTER NORMALLY RESERVED FOR CHIEFS OF STATE OR GOVT. FURTHER EXPLAINED THAT RATSIKAKA SCHEDULED BE RECEIVED BY SECRETARY ROGERS FOR MEETING AND LUNCHEON BEFORE PROCEEDING TO CAPE KENNEDY FOR SKYLAB II LAUNCHING AND THEN STOCKRAISING AREAS. TOLD DUMONT ALSO OF PROBABILITY THAT RATSIKAKA WOULD SIGN \$1.2 MILLION TELECOM LOAN AGREEMENT AND THAT EMB HOPES ASS'T SECTY RICHARDSON WILL BE ABLE RECEIVE RATSIKAKA TO DISCUSS LATTER'S REQUEST FOR BOURSES. EXPLAINED EMB THINKING IN TERMS OF MAXIMUM NUMBER OF FIVE. MENTIONED ALSO THAT USG AND GOMR DISCUSSING \$2.5 MILLION AMENDMENT TO EARLIER RAILROAD LOAN.

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3. DUMONT ASKED WHETHER RATSIRAKA VISIT AT USG OR GOMR INITIATIVE. DCM EXPLAINED THAT FONMIN HAD MADE IT KNOWN LAST YEAR PRIOR TO HIS VISIT TO PRC THAT HE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN INVITATION TO VISIT US. WE HAD INFORMED HIM EARLY THIS YEAR OF INVITATION, AND GOMR HAD ANNOUNCED IT 02 MAR JUST PRIOR RATSIRAKA'S DEPARTURE FOR ROMANIA AS EVIDENCE OF OMNIDIRECTIONAL FOREIGN POLICY. DUMONT THEN COMMENTED THAT INVITATION WAS INDEED NOT SUED AFTER CONCLUSION FRANCO-MALAGASY NEGOTIATIONS.

4. DESPITE EXPLANATION PARA 2 ABOVE, DUMONT ASKED IF VISIT WAS NOT DOWNGRADED TO "UNOFFICIAL" BECAUSE OF US DISPLEASURE WITH GOMR'S MORE BELLIGERENT NON- ALIGNMENT AND HARD LINE ON AFRICAN LIBERATION. DCM REPEATED THAT MALAGASY POLICY HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH LEVEL OF VISIT FOR FONMIN AND REITERATED THAT OFFICIAL VISITS NORMALLY RESERVED FOR CHIEFS OF STATE OR GOVT. DUMONT THEN SEEMED TO BELIEVE EXPLANATION.

5. DUMONT APOLOGIZED FOR RAISING NASA QUESTION AND HOPED DCM WOULD STOP HIM IF SUBJECT WAS INAPPROPRIATE. HE SPECIFICALLY WANTED TO KNOW WHETHER EMBASSY FORESEES PROBLEM MAINTAINING NASA STATION NOW THAT FRENCH FORCES WERE BEING REMOVED. DCM EXPLAINED THAT GOMR UNDERSTANDS THAT NASA STATION IS NOT MILITARY INSTALLATION HAS SHOWN NO INCLINATION LINK NASA STATION WITH FRENCH MILITARY PRESENCE. QUITE TO CONTRARY, GOVT HAD SHOWN CONCERN THAT DIFFERENCE WAS NOT WELL ENOUGH UNDERSTOOD BY MANY MALAGASY AND WAS LOOKING FOR WAY TO WARD OFF CRITICISM FROM AKFM, MFM, AND OTHER RADICALS FOR ALLOWING STATION TO REMAIN. DCM EXPLAINED THAT AS ONE MEASURE, NASA AND USIS ATTEMPTING TO ENCOURAGE GREATER INTEREST OF MALAGASY IN VISITING STATION SO THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND BETTER UNCLASSIFIED NATURE OF OPERATION AND UNCLASSIFIED USES OF DATA GATHERED. DUMONT WAS VERY SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT NASA STATION IS OPEN TO PUBLIC AND INDICATED INTENTION TO VISIT IT HIMSELF, " PARTICULARLY SINCE THERE IS RELATIVELY LITTLE OF INTEREST TO SEE IN AND AROUND TANANARIVE".

6. BELIEVE DISCUSSION WAS USEFUL IN ALLAYING POSSIBLE FRENCH APPREHENSIONS THAT INVITATION TO RATSIRAKA IN SOME CONFIDENTIAL

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WAY REFLECTS USG SATISFACTION OVER OUTCOME FRANCO-MALAGASY TALKS. MENDENHALL

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